# THE JOHN CALVIN BIBLE COMMENTARIES

# HARMONY OF THE LAW

VOL. 4

# Commentaries On The Harmony Of The Law Vol. 4

# John Calvin

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# John Calvin - A Biography

By William Barry

This man, undoubtedly the greatest of Protestant divines, and perhaps, after St. Augustine, the most perseveringly followed by his disciples of any Western writer on theology, was born at Noyon in Picardy, France, 10 July, 1509, and died at Geneva, 27 May, 1564.

A generation divided him from Luther, whom he never met. By birth, education, and temper these two protagonists of the reforming movement were strongly contrasted. Luther was a Saxon peasant, his father a miner; Calvin sprang from the French middle-class, and his father, an attorney, had purchased the freedom of the City of Noyon, where he practised civil and canon law. Luther entered the Order of Augustinian Hermits, took a monk's vows, was made a priest and incurred much odium by marrying a nun. Calvin never was ordained in the Catholic Church; his training was chiefly in law and the humanities; he took no vows. Luther's eloquence made him popular by its force, humour, rudeness, and vulgar style. Calvin spoke to the learned at all times, even when preaching before multitudes. His manner is classical; he reasons on system; he has little humour; instead of striking with a cudgel he uses the weapons of a deadly logic and persuades by a teacher's authority, not by a demagogue's calling of names. He writes French as well as Luther writes German, and like him has been reckoned a pioneer in the modern development of his native tongue. Lastly, if we term the doctor of Wittenberg a mystic, we may sum up Calvin as a scholastic; he gives articulate expression to the principles which Luther had stormily thrown out upon the world in his vehement pamphleteering; and the "Institutes" as they were left by their author have remained ever since the standard of orthodox Protestant belief in all the Churches known as "Reformed." His French disciples called their sect "the religion"; such it has proved to be outside the Roman world.

The family name, spelt in many ways, was Cauvin latinized according to the custom of the age as Calvinus. For some unknown reason the Reformer is commonly called Maître Jean C. His mother, Jeanne Le Franc, born in the Diocese of

Cambrai, is mentioned as "beautiful and devout"; she took her little son to various shrines and brought him up a good Catholic. On the father's side, his ancestors were seafaring men. His grandfather settled at Pont l'Evêgue near Paris, and had two sons who became locksmiths; the third was Gerard, who turned procurator at Novon, and there his four sons and two daughters saw the light. He lived in the Place au Blé (Cornmarket). Noyon, a bishop's see, had long been a fief of the powerful old family of Hangest, who treated it as their personal property. But an everlasting quarrel, in which the city took part, went on between the bishop and the chapter. Charles de Hangest, nephew of the too wellknown Georges d'Amboise, Archbishop of Rouen, surrendered the bishopric in 1525 to his own nephew John, becoming his vicar-general. John kept up the battle with his canons until the Parliament of Paris intervened, upon which he went to Rome, and at last died in Paris in 1577. This prelate had Protestant kinsfolk; he is charged with having fostered heresy which in those years was beginning to raise its head among the French. Clerical dissensions, at all events, allowed the new doctrines a promising field; and the Calvins were more or less infected by them before 1530.

Gerard's four sons were made clerics and held benefices at a tender age. The Reformer was given one when a boy of twelve, he became Curé of Saint-Martin de Marteville in the Vermandois in 1527, and of Pont l'Eveque in 1529. Three of the boys attended the local Collège des Capettes, and there John proved himself an apt scholar. But his people were intimate with greater folk, the de Montmor, a branch of the line of Hangest, which led to his accompanying some of their children to Paris in 1523, when his mother was probably dead and his father had married again. The latter died in 1531, under excommunication from the chapter for not sending in his

accounts. The old man's illness, not his lack of honesty, was, we are told, the cause. Yet his son Charles, nettled by the censure, drew towards the Protestant doctrines. He was accused in 1534 of denying the Catholic dogma of the Eucharist, and died out of the Church in 1536; his body was publicly gibbeted as that of a recusant.

Meanwhile, young John was going through his own trials at the University of Paris, the dean or syndic of which, Noel Bédier, had stood up against Erasmus and bore hard upon Le Fèvre d'Etaples (Stapulensis), celebrated for his translation of the Bible into French. Calvin, a "martinet", or oppidan, in the Collèege de la Marche, made this man's acquaintance (he was from Picardy) and may have glanced into his Latin commentary on St. Paul, dated 1512, which Doumerque considers the first Protestant book emanating from a French pen. Another influence tending the same way was that of Corderius, Calvin's tutor, to whom he dedicated afterwards his annotation of I Thessalonians, remarking, "if there be any good thing in what I have published, I owe it to you". Corderius had an excellent Latin style, his life was austere, and his "Colloquies" earned him enduring fame. But he fell under suspicion of heresy, and by Calvin's aid took refuge in Geneva, where he died September 1564. A third herald of the "New Learning" was George Cop, physician to Francis I, in whose house Calvin found a welcome and gave ear to the religious discussions which Cop favoured. And a fourth was Pierre-Robert d'Olivet of Noyon, who also translated the Scriptures, our youthful man of letters, his nephew, writing (in 1535) a Latin preface to the Old Testament and a French one — his first appearance as a native author — to the New Testament.

By 1527, when no more than eighteen, Calvin's education was complete in its main lines. He had learned to be a

humanist and a reformer. The "sudden conversion" to a spiritual life in 1529, of which he speaks, must not be taken quite literally. He had never been an ardent Catholic; but the stories told at one time of his ill-regulated conduct have no foundation; and by a very natural process he went over to the side on which his family were taking their stand. In 1528 he inscribed himself at Orléans as a law student, made friends with Francis Daniel, and then went for a year to Bourges, where he began preaching in private. Margaret d'Angoulême, sister of Francis I, and Duchess of Berry, was living there with many heterodox Germans about her.

He is found again at Paris in 1531. Wolmar had taught him Greek at Bourges; from Vatable he learned Hebrew; and he entertained some relations with the erudite Budaeus. About this date he printed a commentary on Seneca's "De Clementiâ". It was merely an exercise in scholarship, having no political significance. Francis I was, indeed, handling Protestants severely, and Calvin, now Doctor of Law at Orléans, composed, so the story runs, an oration on Christian philosophy which Nicholas Cop delivered on All Saints' Day, 1532, both writer and speaker having to take instant flight from pursuit by the royal inquisitors. This legend has been rejected by modern critics. Calvin spent some time, however, with Canon du Tillet at Angoulême under a feigned designation. In May, 1534, he went to Novon, gave up his benefice, and, it is said, was imprisoned. But he got away to Nerac in Bearn, the residence of the Duchess Margaret, and there again encountered Le Fèvre, whose French Bible had been condemned by the Sorbonne to the flames. His next visit to Paris fell out during a violent campaign of the Lutherans against the Mass, which brought on reprisals, Etienne de la Forge and others were burnt in the Place de Grève; and Calvin accompanied by du Tillet, escaped — though not without adventures — to Metz and Strasburg. In the latter

city Bucer reigned supreme. The leading reformers dictated laws from the pulpit to their adherents, and this journey proved a decisive one for the French humanist, who, though by nature timid and shy, committed himself to a war on paper with his own sovereign. The famous letter to Francis I is dated 23 August, 1535. It served as a prologue to the "Institutes", of which the first edition came out in March, 1536, not in French but in Latin. Calvin's apology for lecturing the king was, that placards denouncing the Protestants as rebels had been posted up all over the realm. Francis I did not read these pages, but if he had done so he would have discovered in them a plea, not for toleration, which the Reformer utterly scorned, but for doing away with Catholicism in favour of the new gospel. There could be only one true Church, said the young theologian, therefore kings ought to make an utter end of popery. (For an account of the "Institutes" see ) The second edition belongs to 1539, the first French translation to 1541; the final Latin, as revised by its author, is of 1559; but that in common use, dated 1560, has additions by his disciples. "It was more God's work than mine", said Calvin, who took for his motto "Omnia ad Dei gloriam", and in allusion to the change he had undergone in 1529 assumed for his device a hand stretched out from a burning heart.

A much disputed chapter in Calvin's biography is the visit which he was long thought to have paid at Ferraro to the Protestant Duchess Renée, daughter of Louis XII. Many stories clustered about his journey, now given up by the best-informed writers. All we know for certain is that the Reformer, after settling his family affairs and bringing over two of his brothers and sisters to the views he had adopted undertook, in consequence of the war between Charles V and Francis I, to reach Bale by way of Geneva, in July, 1536. At Geneva the Swiss preacher Fare, then looking for help in his propaganda, besought him with such vehemence

to stay and teach theology that, as Calvin himself relates, he was terrified into submission. We are not accustomed to fancy the austere prophet so easily frightened. But as a student and recluse new to public responsibilities, he may well have hesitated before plunging into the troubled waters of Geneva, then at their stormiest period. No portrait of him belonging to this time is extant. Later he is represented as of middle height, with bent shoulders, piercing eyes, and a large forehead; his hair was of an auburn tinge. Study and fasting occasioned the severe headaches from which he suffered continually. In private life he was cheerful but sensitive, not to say overbearing, his friends treated him with delicate consideration. His habits were simple; he cared nothing for wealth, and he never allowed himself a holiday. His correspondence, of which 4271 letters remain, turns chiefly on doctrinal subjects. Yet his strong, reserved character told on all with whom he came in contact; Geneva submitted to his theocratic rule, and the Reformed Churches accepted his teaching as though it were infallible.

Such was the stranger whom Farel recommended to his fellow Protestants, "this Frenchman", chosen to lecture on the Bible in a city divided against itself. Geneva had about 15,000 inhabitants. Its bishop had long been its prince limited, however, by popular privileges. The vidomne, or mayor, was the Count of Savoy, and to his family the bishopric seemed a property which, from 1450, they bestowed on their younger children. John of Savoy, illegitimate son of the previous bishop, sold his rights to the duke, who was head of the clan, and died in 1519 at Pignerol. Jean de la Baume, last of its ecclesiastical princes, abandoned the city, which received Protestant teachers from Berne in 1519 and from Fribourg in 1526. In 1527 the arms of Savoy were torn down; in 1530 the Catholic party underwent defeat, and Geneva became independent. It had

two councils, but the final verdict on public measures rested with the people. These appointed Farel, a convert of Le Fevre, as their preacher in 1534. A discussion between the two Churches from 30 May to 24 June, 1535 ended in victory for the Protestants. The altars were desecrated, the sacred images broken, the Mass done away with. Bernese troops entered and "the Gospel" was accepted, 21 May, 1536. This implied persecution of Catholics by the councils which acted both as Church and State. Priests were thrown into prison; citizens were fined for not attending sermons. At Zürich, Basle, and Berne the same laws were established. Toleration did not enter into the ideas of the time.

But though Calvin had not introduced this legislation, it was mainly by his influence that in January, 1537 the "articles" were voted which insisted on communion four times a year, set spies on delinquents, established a moral censorship, and punished the unruly with excommunication. There was to be a children's catechism, which he drew up; it ranks among his best writings. The city now broke into "jurants" and "nonjurors" for many would not swear to the "articles"; indeed, they never were completely accepted. Questions had arisen with Berne touching points that Calvin judged to be indifferent. He made a figure in the debates at Lausanne defending the freedom of Geneva. But disorders ensued at home, where recusancy was yet rife; in 1538 the council exiled Farel, Calvin, and the blind evangelist, Couraud. The Reformer went to Strasburg, became the guest of Capito and Bucer, and in 1539 was explaining the New Testament to French refugees at fifty two florins a year. Cardinal Sadolet had addressed an open letter to the Genevans, which their exile now answered. Sadolet urged that schism was a crime; Calvin replied that the Roman Church was corrupt. He gained applause by his keen debating powers at Hagenau,

Worms, and Ratisbon. But he complains of his poverty and ill-health, which did not prevent him from marrying at this time Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist whom he had converted. Nothing more is known of this lady, except that she brought him a son who died almost at birth in 1542, and that her own death took place in 1549.

After some negotiation Ami Perrin, commissioner for Geneva, persuaded Calvin to return. He did so, not very willingly, on 13 September, 1541. His entry was modest enough. The church constitution now recognized "pastors, doctors, elders, deacons" but supreme power was given to the magistrate. Ministers had the spiritual weapon of God's word; the consistory never, as such, wielded the secular arm Preachers, led by Calvin, and the councils, instigated by his opponents, came frequently into collision. Yet the ordinances of 1541 were maintained; the clergy, assisted by lay elders, governed despotically and in detail the actions of every citizen. A presbyterian Sparta might be seen at Geneva; it set an example to later Puritans, who did all in their power to imitate its discipline. The pattern held up was that of the Old Testament, although Christians were supposed to enjoy Gospel liberty. In November, 1552, the Council declared that Calvin's "Institutes" were a "holy doctrine which no man might speak against." Thus the State issued dogmatic decrees, the force of which had been anticipated earlier, as when Jacques Gouet was imprisoned on charges of impiety in June, 1547, and after severe torture was beheaded in July. Some of the accusations brought against the unhappy young man were frivolous, others doubtful. What share, if any, Calvin took in this judgment is not easy to ascertain. The execution of however must be laid at his door; it has given greater offence by far than the banishment of Castellio or the penalties inflicted on Bolsec — moderate men opposed to extreme views in discipline and doctrine, who fell under

suspicion as reactionary. The Reformer did not shrink from his self-appointed task. Within five years fifty-eight sentences of death and seventy-six of exile, besides numerous committals of the most eminent citizens to prison, took place in Geneva. The iron yoke could not be shaken off. In 1555, under Ami Perrin, a sort of revolt was attempted. No blood was shed, but Perrin lost the day, and Calvin's theocracy triumphed.

"I am more deeply scandalized", wrote Gibbon "at the single execution of Servetus than at the hecatombs which have blazed in the autos-da-fé of Spain and Portugal". He ascribes the enmity of Calvin to personal malice and perhaps envy. The facts of the case are pretty well ascertained. Born in 1511, perhaps at Tudela, Michael Served v Reves studied at Toulouse and was present in Bologna at the coronation of Charles V. He travelled in Germany and brought out in 1531 at Hagenau his treatise "De Trinitatis Erroribus", a strong Unitarian work which made much commotion among the more orthodox Reformers. He met Calvin and disputed with him at Paris in 1534, became corrector of the press at Lyons; gave attention to medicine, discovered the lesser circulation of the blood, and entered into a fatal correspondence with the dictator of Geneva touching a new volume "Christianismi Restitutio," which he intended to publish. In 1546 the exchange of letters ceased. The Reformer called Servetus arrogant (he had dared to criticize the "Institutes" in marginal glosses), and uttered the significant menace, "If he comes here and I have any authority, I will never let him leave the place alive." The "Restitutio" appeared in 1553. Calvin at once had its author delated to the Dominican inquisitor Ory at Lyons, sending on to him the man's letters of 1545-46 and these glosses. Hereupon the Spaniard was imprisoned at Vienne, but he escaped by friendly connivance, and was burnt there only in effigy. Some

extraordinary fascination drew him to Geneva, from which he intended to pass the Alps. He arrived on 13 August, 1553. The next day Calvin, who had remarked him at the sermon, got his critic arrested, the preacher's own secretary coming forward to accuse him. Calvin drew up forty articles of charge under three heads, concerning the nature of God, infant baptism, and the attack which Servetus had ventured on his own teaching. The council hesitated before taking a deadly decision, but the dictator, reinforced by Farel, drove them on. In prison the culprit suffered much and loudly complained. The Bernese and other Swiss voted for some indefinite penalty. But to Calvin his power in Geneva seemed lost, while the stigma of heresy; as he insisted, would cling to all Protestants if this innovator were not put to death. "Let the world see" Bullinger counselled him, "that Geneva wills the glory of Christ."

Accordingly, sentence was pronounced 26 October, 1553, of burning at the stake. "Tomorrow he dies," wrote Calvin to Farel. When the deed was done, the Reformer alleged that he had been anxious to mitigate the punishment, but of this fact no record appears in the documents. He disputed with Servetus on the day of execution and saw the end. A defence and apology next year received the adhesion of the Genevan ministers. Melanchthon, who had taken deep umbrage at the blasphemies of the Spanish Unitarian, strongly approved in well-known words. But a group that included Castellio published at Basle in 1554 a pamphlet with the title, "Should heretics be persecuted?" It is considered the first plea for toleration in modern times. Beza replied by an argument for the affirmative, couched in violent terms; and Calvin, whose favorite disciple he was, translated it into French in 1559. The dialogue, "Vaticanus", written against the "Pope of Geneva" by Castellio, did not get into print until 1612. Freedom of

opinion, as Gibbon remarks, "was the consequence rather than the design of the Reformation."

Another victim to his fiery zeal was Gentile, one of an Italian sect in Geneva, which also numbered among its adherents Alciati and Gribaldo. As more or less Unitarian in their views, they were required to sign a confession drawn up by Calvin in 1558. Gentile subscribed it reluctantly, but in the upshot he was condemned and imprisoned as a perjurer. He escaped only to be twice incarcerated at Berne, where in 1566, he was beheaded. Calvin's impassioned polemic against these Italians betrays fear of the Socinianism which was to lay waste his vineyard. Politically he leaned on the French refugees, now abounding in the city, and more than equal in energy — if not in numbers — to the older native factions. Opposition died out. His continual preaching, represented by 2300 sermons extant in the manuscripts and a vast correspondence, gave to the Reformer an influence without example in his closing years. He wrote to Edward VI, helped in revising the Book of Common Prayer, and intervened between the rival English parties abroad during the Marian period. In the Huguenot troubles he sided with the more moderate. His censure of the conspiracy of Amboise in 1560 does him honour. One great literary institution founded by him, the College, afterwards the University, of Geneva, flourished exceedingly. The students were mostly French. When Beza was rector it had nearly 1500 students of various grades.

Geneva now sent out pastors to the French congregations and was looked upon as the Protestant Rome. Through Knox, "the Scottish champion of the Swiss Reformation", who had been preacher to the exiles in that city, his native land accepted the discipline of the Presbytery and the doctrine of predestination as expounded in Calvin's

"Institutes". The Puritans in England were also descendants of the French theologian. His dislike of theatres, dancing and the amenities of society was fully shared by them. The town on Lake Leman was described as without crime and destitute of amusements. Calvin declaimed against the "Libertines", but there is no evidence that any such people had a footing inside its walls The cold, hard, but upright disposition characteristic of the Reformed Churches, less genial than that derived from Luther, is due entirely to their founder himself. Its essence is a concentrated pride, a love of disputation, a scorn of opponents. The only art that it tolerates is music, and that not instrumental. It will have no Christian feasts in its calendar, and it is austere to the verge of Manichaean hatred of the body. When dogma fails the Calvinist, he becomes, as in the instance of Carlyle, almost a pure Stoic. "At Geneva, as for a time in Scotland," says J. A. Froude, "moral sins were treated as crimes to be punished by the magistrate." The Bible was a code of law, administered by the clergy. Down to his dying day Calvin preached and taught. By no means an aged man, he was worn out in these frequent controversies. On 25 April, 1564, he made his will, leaving 225 French crowns, of which he bequeathed ten to his college, ten to the poor, and the remainder to his nephews and nieces. His last letter was addressed to Farel. He was buried without pomp, in a spot which is not now ascertainable. In the year 1900 a monument of expiation was erected to Servetus in the Place Champel. Geneva has long since ceased to be the head of Calvinism. It is a rallying point for Free Thought, Socialist propaganda, and Nihilist conspiracies. But in history it stands out as the Sparta of the Reformed churches, and Calvin is its Lycurgus.

# COMMENTARIES ON THE HARMONY OF THE LAW VOL. 4

# **Deuteronomy 1**

# **Deuteronomy 1:6-8**

- 6. The Lord our God spoke unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:6. Jehova Deus noster loquutus est nobis in Horeb, dicendo: Sat vobis est habitasse in monte isto.
- 7. Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Arnorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea-side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.
  7. Vertite vos, et proficiscimini, et ite ad montem Amorrhmorum, et ad omnes vicinos ejus, in solitudine, in monte, et planitie, et rueridle, et in littore marls, terrain Chenanaei a Lebanon usque ad flumen magnum flumen Euphraten.
- 8. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord. swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their seed after them.
  8. Vide, dedi coram vobis terram, ingredimini, et possidete terram illam quam juravit Jehova patribus vestris, Abraham, Isaac et Jacob, se daturum eis, et semini eorum post ipsos.
- **6.** The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb. In this Second Narration, Moses expressly declares that God not only gave them a visible sign, by uplifting the cloud, but that He also verbally commanded the people to leave Mount Sinai, and to set about the performance of the rest of their journey. God says, then, that enough time had been spent in one place; <sup>f1</sup> for, before they left it, an entire year had passed away there. Although there were eleven days' journey

before them before they would arrive at Kadesh-barnea, nevertheless, lest anything should delay the people, who were naturally but too indolent, tie stimulates them by setting before them the ease with which it might be accomplished, telling them that they had but to lift up their feet and advance, in order to attain the promised rest.

## Numbers 9

#### **Numbers 9:17-23**

- 17. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. 17. Quum discederet nubes a tabernaculo, postea proficiscebantur filii Israel: atque in loco ubi manebat nubes, illic castrametabantur filii Israel.
- **18.** At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. **18.** Ad os Jehovae proficiscebantur filii Israel, et ad os Jehovae castrametabantur: cunctis diebus quibus stabat nubes supra tabernaculum, manebant.
- 19. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not.
  19. Quum autem moram trahebat nubes supra tabernaculum diebus multis, tunc observabant filii Israel custodiam Jehovae, et non proficiscebantur.
- 20. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.
  20. Quando autem nubes paucis diebus erat super tabernaculum, ad os Jehovae manebant, et ad os Jehovae proficiscebantur.
- **21.** And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. **21.** Quando igitur erat nubes a vespera usque mane, ascendebat autem nubes mane, tunc

proficiscebantur: aut si nocte et die, et postea ascendebat nubes, tunc proficiscebantur.

- 22. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed.

  22. Aut duobus diebus, aut mense, aut anno, quando moram trahebat nubes super tabernaculum, manendo super illud, in castris manebant filii Israel, nec proficiscebantur: si autem illa ascendebat, tunc proficiscebantur.
- 23. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

  23. Ad os Jehovae castrametabantur, et ad os Jehovae proficiscebantur: custodiam Jehovae servabant ad os Jehovae per manum Mosis.

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**17.** And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle. Moses before informed us that the tabernacle was so distinguished by a visible miracle, that God made it manifest that He dwelt there: not that He left heaven and removed to that earthly house, but in order to be nigh to His people by the presence of His power and grace, whenever He was invoked by them. He now reports another miracle, that God, by uplifting the cloud, gave a sign, as it were, by which He commanded them to strike the camp; and when the cloud rested on the tabernacle, it was a sign that they should abide where they were. Here, however, a question arises; since it has been already said that, immediately after their departure from Egypt, the cloud was like a banner to direct the march of the people, it follows that they were not now for the first time admonished by its being lifted up to collect their baggage, and ordered as it were to advance. The answer is easy, that the people were indeed previously directed by the sight of the cloud, as we have seen; but that here a new fact is related, viz., that since the tabernacle was set up, the

cloud, which hitherto was suspended in the air and went before the camp, now settled on the sanctuary: for a fresh acquisition of grace is here proclaimed by the more certain and conspicuous sign, as if God showed himself more closely and familiarly as the leader of the people. Although, therefore, the cloud had been the director of their march from its very commencement, yet it more fully illustrated the glory of the tabernacle when it proceeded from thence.

- **18.** At the commandment of the Lord. <sup>f2</sup> The mouth is here used by metonymy for the speech; nor does there appear to me to be so much harshness in the Hebraism, but that it may be appropriately retained. But it is asked whether God actually spoke or not; for the word mouth is often repeated. It is indeed likely that Moses was instructed but once what was meant by the removal or remaining of the cloud; yet I doubt not but that the name of word, or commandment, was given to the sign, inasmuch as God speaks as much to the eyes by outward signs as He does to the ears by His voice. Still, from this mode of expression we may gather that the use of signs <sup>f3</sup> is perverted and nullified, unless they are taken to be visible doctrine, as Augustin writes. The repetition, which certainly has no little force, shows how worthy this is of observation.
- 19. Then the children kept the charge of the Lord. Some, f4 in my opinion, extend this too far, thinking that when the cloud tarried, the children of Israel, being as it were at leisure, employed themselves in the worship of God; but I restrict it rather to that heedfulness which is then praised at some length. To keep the charge (custodiam,) then, is equivalent to regarding the will of God with the greatest earnestness and care. For, when the cloud had begun to rest in any place, the people knew that they were to remain there; but if on the next day they were not attentive, the

cloud might vanish, and thus their neglect and carelessness might deprive them of this incomparable advantage.

To this end it is said immediately afterwards that, If for one day, or more, or even for a month, or a year, the cloud stood still, the people was, as it were, tied to the spot. The old interpreter for has not badly rendered it, "The children of Israel were upon the watch;" since day and night they anxiously expected the time when God would command them to move forward. The last verse of the chapter confirms this sense, where it is again added, that "they kept the charge of the Lord at His mouth by the hand of Moses:" whence it appears that Moses was God's interpreter, so that they might set forth on their march whenever the cloud being lifted up pointed out to them the way. Nor can it be doubted but that it preceded them; so that they might know in what direction God would have them proceed, and whither they were to go. Moreover, it must be observed that in both respects it is counted worthy of praise in the people, that they should either journey, or continue where they were, at God's command. Thus is that absurd activity condemned which engages itself in endless work; as if men could only obey God by turmoil. Whereas it is sometimes no less a virtue to rest, when it so pleases God. <sup>f6</sup>

## **Exodus 40**

## **Exodus 40:36-38**

- **36.** And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: **36.** Quum recederet nubes a tabernaculo, proficiscebantur filii Israel in cunctis profectionibus suis:
- 37. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.37. Quod si non recederet nubes, non proficiscebantur

usque ad diem qua recedebat.

**38.** For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. **38.** Quia nubes Jehovae erat super tabernaculum interdiu, ignis vero noctu in eo, coram oculis totius domus Israel, in cunctis profectionibus eorum

**38.** For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle. Moses more distinctly explains what he had said generally respecting the cloud, viz., that by night a fiery column appeared, because the cloud would not have been visible amidst the darkness. A second explanation is also added, that this did not happen once or twice only, but "in all their journeys;" so that they were never without a sight of the cloud, which might be a witness of God's presence, whether, being settled on the tabernacle, it commanded them to rest, or, by its ascension, gave them the sign for removing the camp. Now, the equability of this proceeding, in all the variety of times and marches, did not a little conduce to certainty; for, if the cloud had daily accomplished the same course, this very regularity would have obscured the power' of God; but when for a whole year it did not move, and then frequently proceeded to a new place, and now by its. guidance pointed out a longer journey, now a shorter one, by this very diversity the paternal care of God, who was never unmindful of His people, more conspicuously manifested itself.

## **Numbers 10**

**Numbers 10:29-36** 

- 29. And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.

  29. Dixit autem Moses ad Hobab filium Reuel Madianitae soceri sui, Nos proficiscimur ad locum de quo dixit Jehova, Illum dabo vobis: veni nobiscum, et benefaciemus tibi: quia Jehova loquutus est beneficentiam super Israelem.
- **30.** And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. **30.** Respondit autem ei, Non veniam: sed ad terram meam, et ad natale solum meum ibo.
- **31.** And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.
- **31.** Tunc dixit, Ne derelinquas nos: quia propterea nosti mansiones nostras in deserto, et fuisti nobis pro oculis.
- **32.** And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. **32.** Quum autem veneris nobiscum, et evenerit nobis bonum illud quod benefacturus est Jehova nobis, tum benefaciemus tibi.
- **33.** And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting-place for them. **33.** Profecti sunt itaque a monte Jehovae via trium dierum: et arca foederis Jehovae proficiscebatur ante eos via trium dierum illorum, ad explorandam illis requiem.
- **34.** And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. **34.** Et nubes Jehovae erat super eos interdiu, dum proficiscerentur e castris.
- 35. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.35. Quum autem coepit proficisci arca, dicebat Moses, Surge Jehova, et despergantur inimici tui, et fugiant odio habentes te a facie tua:
- 36. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.36. Quando vero requiescebat, dicebat, Revertere Jehova ad decem millia millium Israelis.

**29.** And Moses said unto Hobab the son of Raguel. Very grossly are those mistaken who have supposed Hobab to be Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, whom we have already seen to have returned a few days after he had come to see him. Now, old age almost in a state of decrepitude would have been but little suited for, or equal to, such difficult labors. Moses was now eighty years old, and still far short of the age of his father-in-law. But all doubt is removed by the fourth chapter of Judges, where we read that the descendants of Hobab were still surviving in the land of Canaan. When, therefore, the good old man went home, he left Hobab his son — still in the vigor of life, and to whom on account of his neighborhood, the desertcountry was well known — as a companion for his son-inlaw, that might be useful to him in the performance of many services. Here, however, whether wearied by delay and difficulties, or offended by the malignant and perverse spirit of the people, or preferring his home and a stationary life to those protracted wanderings, he desired to follow his father. In order, however, that we might know that he had not sought his dismissal as a mere feint, (as is often the case, f8 ) Moses expressly states that he could not immediately prevail upon him to stay by his prayers; nay, that he was not attracted by the promises whereby Moses endeavored to tempt him, until he had been perseveringly entreated. Although the expectation of the promised land is set before him, yet, since mention is only made of temporal and transient prosperity, it may thence be probably conjectured that he had not profited by his advantages as he should. He had seen and heard the tokens of God's awful power when the Law was given; yet Moses urges him to come on by no other argument than that he would enjoy the riches of the land. Unless perhaps Moses desired to

give him some taste of the graciousness and fatherly love of God as manifested in the temporal blessing, in order to lift up his mind to higher things. Still he merely refers to the promise of God, and then engages that he shall share in all their good things. Nevertheless, this alone is no trifle, that he should be attracted by no uncertain hope, but by the sure enjoyment of those good things which God, who cannot lie, had promised: for deceptive allurements often invite men to undergo labors, and to encounter perils; but Moses brings forward God, as it were, as his surety, inasmuch as tie had promised that He would give the people a fertile land, full of an abundance of all good things. At any rate, Hobab represents to us, as in a mirror, the innate disposition of the whole human race, to long for that which it apprehends by the carnal sense. It is natural to prefer our country, however barren and wretched, to other lands the most fertile and delightful: thus the Ithaca of Ulysses has passed into a proverb. f9 But let me now reprove another fault, viz., that, generally speaking, all set their affections on this present life: thus Hobab despises the promise of God, and holds fast to the love of his native land.

**31.** And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee. Moses perseveres and urges what he had just said, that Hobab should be a sharer in the prosperity which God had given his people reason to expect. "To this end" (he says) "thou hast known all our stations in the desert," which words commentators do not appear to have observed or understood; for they translate them simply, "for thou hast known," as if Moses desired to retain Hobab to be of use to himself, whereas there is more than one causal particle here; f10 and thus it is literally, "Since, for this cause, thou hast known all our resting-places," etc. Its meaning, then, is as follows, that Hobab was ill-advised for his own

interest; for he had borne many inconveniences, for this reason, that he might at sonic time or other receive his recompense; as if it were said, Wherefore hast thou hitherto endured so many inconveniences whilst directing our course, unless that thou mightest enjoy with us the blessings of our repose? In a word, Moses signifies that the labors of Hobab would be vain and fruitless, unless he should endure them a little while longer, until, together with the children of Israel, he should enjoy the promised inheritance. What is here said, then, does not relate to the future, as if Moses had said, Be to us instead of eyes, as thou hast been heretofore; but by reminding him that the reward of his labors was at hand, he urges and encourages him to proceed.

- **33.** And they departed from the mount of the Lord. He calls Sinai "the mount of the Lord," because in no other place had God's glory been so conspicuously manifested. This, I admit, it had been called by anticipation (kata< pro>lhyin) before the promulgation of the law; but this name was imposed upon it afterwards to inspire eternal reverence for the law. By "three days' journey," we must understand a continuous march of three days, for they did not pitch their tents until they reached the desert of Paran, but slept in the. open air. When it is said that the ark went before them in the three days' journey, there is no reference to its distance, as if it was sent forward three days ahead; but that it was so placed in their van that, when the cloud settled upon it, they halted as at a station prescribed to them by God. This was the searching for a resting-place of which he speaks.
- **35.** And it came to pass, when the ark set forward. Since their journey was by no means a peaceful one, but the attack of enemies was constantly to be dreaded, it was

needful to beseech God that He would go forth as if prepared for battle. Thus, too, did Moses support their courage, lest any more immediate cause for terror should render them sluggish and inert. It is, then, as if he had prayed thus: O Lord, not only show us the way, but open it to us also by the power of thy hand in the destruction of the enemies. He calls them not the enemies of the people but of God, in order that the Israelites might be assured that they fought under His auspices; for thus might both a more certain victory be expected, since the righteous God, who avenges iniquity, was defending His own cause; and also, it was no slight matter of consolation and rejoicing, when the people heard, that whosoever should arise to harass them unjustly were also the enemies of God, since He will protect his people as the apple of His eye. Therefore has the Prophet borrowed this passage, in order to arm the Church with confidence, and to maintain it in cheerfulness under the violent assaults of its enemies. (Psalm 68:1.) Further, the analogy and similitude between the visible sign, and the thing signified, must be observed; for Moses was not so foolish as to address the Ark in these words; he only asked God to prove effectually that the Ark was a lively image of His power and glory.

**36.** And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord. By thus praying he also exhorts the people to be patient, lest the weariness which arose from the delay should beget indignation. Otherwise it would have been annoying that the time of their journeying should be protracted, so that they would arrive the later at their rest. And we see, indeed, how their minds were exasperated, as if a slower progress was a kind of disappointment. In order, therefore, to correct this impatience, Moses reminds them that their halts were advantageous to them, so that God, dwelling at home like the father of a family, might manifest His care of

them; for the allusion is to men who Lake advantage of a time of repose and release from other business, to occupy themselves more un-restrainedly in paying attention to their own family.

### Numbers 11

### **Numbers 11:1-35**

- **1.** And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. **1.** Et fuit populus quasi fatiscentes, displicuit in auribus Jehovae. Audivit enim Jehova, et iratus est furor ejus, exarsitque ignis ipsius contra eos, consumpsitque extremum castrorum.
- 2. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched.2. Tunc clamavit populus ad Mosen, et oravit Moses Jehovam, et concidit ignis.
- **3.** And he called the name of the place Taberah; because the fire of the Lord burnt among them. **3.** Vocavitque nomen illius loci Taberah: quia accensus fuerat in eos ignis Jehovae.
- **4.** And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?
- **4.** Et collectio quae erat in medio ejus, concupiverunt concupiscentia, et aversi sunt: quinetiam fleverunt filii Israel, dicentes, Quis pascet nos carnibus?
- **5.** We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: **5.**Recordamur piscium quos comedebamus in AEgypto gratis, cucumerum, et peponum, et porrorum, et ceparum et alliorum.
- 6. But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.6. At nunc anima nostra arida est, nec quicquam est nisi man in oculis nostris.

- 7. And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium.7. Man autem sicut coriandri semen erat, et color ejus sicut color bdellii.
- 8. And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.
  8. Diffundebant autem se populus, et colligebant, et molebant in mola aut terebant in mortario, coquebantque in olla, faciebantque ex eo placentas, quarum sapor erat sicut sapor recentis olei:
- 9. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell uponit. 9. Quum vero descenderat ros super castra, descendebat man super ipsum.
- **10.** Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses was also displeased. **10.** Audivit itaque Moses populum flentem per familias: quemque ad ostium tabernaculi sui: unde iratus est furor Jehovae valde, ipsi quoque Mosi displicuit.
- 11. And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?11. Et dixit Moses ad Jehovam, Ut quid malefecisti servo tuo? et quare non inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, ut imponeres onus universi populi hujus super me?
- **12.** Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom (as a nursing-father beareth the sucking child) unto the land which thou sworest unto their fathers? **12.** An ego concepi universum populum istum? et an ego genui eum, quod dicis mihi, Porta eum in sinu tuo, quemadmodum ferre solet nutritius infantem, in terram de qua jurasti patribus ejus?
- 13. Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat.13. Unde mihi caro ut dem universo populo huic? Flent enim adversum me, dicendo, Da nobis carnes, ut comedamus.
- 14. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy forme. 14. Non possem ego solus ferre universum populum hunc: quia supra vires meas est.

- 15. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand; if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.15. Quod si ita tu facis mihi, occide me quaeso occidendo, si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, et ne videam malum meum.
- **16.** And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. **16.** Tunc dixit Jehova ad Mosen, Congrega mihi septuaginta viros e senioribus conventionis, ut adstent ibi tecum.
- 17. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone. 17. Tunc descendam, et loquar tecum ibi, et separabo de spiritu qui est in te, et ponam in eis: ut sustineant tecum onus populi: et non sustineas tu solus.
- 18. And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh: (for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt;) therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

  18. Ad populum autem dices, Sanctificamini in crastinum, et comedetis carnes: flevistis enim in auribus Jehovae, dicendo, Quiscomedere faciet nos carnes? certe melius erat nobis in AEgypto: dedit enim Jehova vobis carnes, et comedetis.
- 19. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days:19. Non una die comedetis, neque duobus diebus, neque quinque diebus, neque decem diebus, neque viginti diebus tantum:
- **20.** But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? **20.** Sed usque ad mensem dierum, donec egrediatur e naribus vestris, et sit vobis in abominationem: propterea quod contempsistis Jehovam, qui est in medio vestri, et flevistis coram eo, dicendo, Ut quid egressi sumus ex AEgypto?
- **21.** And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. **21.** Et dixit Moses, Sexcentorum millium peditum est populus in